

The Sounds of Horseshoe a Zoopoetic Reading of *Yılıkı Atı* by Abbas Sayar

Dr. Özlem Akyol 

Pamukkale University, School of Foreign Languages
ozlemakyol12@gmail.com

Abstract

The new perception influenced by the cultural and linguistic turns of the late 20th century requires a less anthropocentric vision for the 21st century. By extension, an increasing scholarly interest in the relation between humans and nonhuman animals and the agentive role of the latter result in the emergence of “zoopoetics.” The theory includes literature to explore different nonhuman agentive forms by analysing how literary texts reproduce animals’ modes of being and reveals that poetic creation is not only sustained through human affair but animals also take an active part in making and shaping poetry. As Aaron Moe indicates “[N]onhuman animals (zoion) are makers (poiesis), and they have agency in that making” (2013, p. 2). A zoopoetic reading of literary texts which focuses on the nonhumans’ creative modes not only shows how nonhuman animals function in conducting the lives of other characters and the very substance of narrative but also forms a basis for the manifestation of the ethical and social dimension of such texts. In this sense, Abbas Sayar, in *Yılıkı Atı* (1970) positions a horse in the centre of the narrative by making it truly an agentive form in a way that the horse’s attitude affects other characters’ lives and the overall formation of the text and, more importantly, makes the reader ponder about the proximity between humans and nonhuman animals as well as socioeconomic issues of 1970s’ Central Anatolia. In this article, then, *Yılıkı Atı* will be explored under the light of zoopoetic theories.

Keywords: Abbas Sayar, *Yılıkı Atı*, zoopoetics.

Nal Sesleri Abbas Sayar’ın *Yılıkı Atı* Adlı Romanının Zoopoetik Bir Okuması

Öz

20. yüzyılın sonlarına doğru gerçekleşen kültürel ve dilbilimsel değişikliklerin şekillendirdiği yeni bakış açısı 21. yüzyıl için daha az insan merkezli bir tutum gerektirir. Buna bağlı olarak, insanlar ve hayvanlar arasındaki ilişkiye ve hayvanların temsil rolüne dair artan bilimsel ilgi “zoopoetik” teorinin doğuşuyla sonuçlanır. Teori edebiyatı hayvanların varoluş hallerini edebi metinlerin nasıl yeniden yorumladığını analiz ederek insan dışı farklı temsil formlarını ön plana çıkarmak için kullanır ve edebi üretimin sadece insan katkısıyla sürdürülmeyeceğini aynı zamanda edebiyatı şekillendirme ve oluşturmada hayvanlarında etkin rol alabileceğini ortaya koyar. Aaron Moe’nun da belirttiği gibi “İnsandışı hayvanlar (zoion) yaratıcıdır (poiesis), ve bu yaratmada payları vardır” (2013, s. 2). Daha çok hayvanların yaratıcı tarafını ön plana çıkaran edebi metinlerin zoopoetik okuması

Sending Date / Gönderim Tarihi: 10/02/2020

Acceptance Date / Kabul Tarihi: 11/04/2020

hayvanların metnin özünü ve diğer karakterlerin hayatını nasıl değiştirdiğini göstermekle kalmaz aynı zamanda bu tür metinlerin içerdikleri ahlaki ve sosyal temaların gözler önüne serilmesi içinde zemin hazırlar. Bu anlamda, *Yılık Atı*'nda (1970) Abbas Sayar bir atı yaratma kapasitesini tamamen öne çıkararak metnin tam ortasına yerleştirir. Atın tutumu direk olarak diğer karakterlerin yaşamlarını ve tüm metnin şekillenmesini etkilemektedir. Daha da önemlisi, okuyucuyu insanlarla hayvanlar arasındaki yakınlığı ve aynı zamanda 1970ler Orta Anadolu'sunun sosyoekonomik konularını yeniden düşünmeye iter. Buna bağlı olarak bu makalede *Yılık Atı* adlı roman zoopoetik teorinin ışığı altında incelenecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Abbas Sayar, *Yılık Atı*, zoopoetics.

INTRODUCTION

The first subject matter for painting was animal. Probably the first paint was animal blood. Prior to that, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the first metaphor was animal.

John Berger,
"Why Look at Animals"

Literature has been at the core of ecocriticism and animal studies in a way that it reflects cultural knowledge in which environment and animals are situated and also represents ideological, social, cultural or economic concerns that are defined through the interactions of human beings with animals and environment. Animals are usually illustrated as protagonists in literary texts. The whale in Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* or the nature in Stephan Crane's *The Open Boat* are good examples for this illustration. They have more agency than that of human characters in both stories. Their capacity to have agency results in a form of practice called "poetics." Both ecocriticism and animal studies have adapted the concept of a "poetics" to their particular research fields. The word stems from the Greek *poiésis*, the noun which means "to make" and "to create." As far as "ecopoetics" is concerned, Kate Rigby argues that "making" and "creating" are not individual activities but "*reframe[s] human creative and emancipatory endeavour as a mode of participation in the more-than-human song of an ever-changing earth*" (2007, p. 251). In the same vein, Aaron Moe giving particular focus on animals considers that "poiesis" cannot be only defined as a human activity. According to his conceptualisation of "zoopoetics," "nonhuman animals (zoion) are makers (poiesis)" and that their participation in the composition of a poem can be conceived as "*a multispecies event*" (2013, p. 2). This shows that both ecopoetics and zoopoetics have a common interest in certain concerns and apply the same methodological approaches to reveal the fundamental assumptions about the process of poetics. However, in ecopoetics human-environment interactions are elaborated and the animal is subsumed into the category of environment. Such taxonomy ignores the fact that animals also dwell imaginatively within the earth. In this sense, zoopoetics makes the existence of animals more complex and connected by striving for finding answers to the questions that are appropriately posed by Middelhoff and Schönbeck

What do animals and environments "do" in literature and how do they relate to each other? How does this relation pertain to our thinking about animals, environments, and artifacts as well as the supposed "divide" between nature and culture? And which role do animals and environments play in the poetics of a text? Are they merely interchangeable devices, a picturesque canvas on which "all too human" stories are painted? Or is there more to literary animals and environments than rhetoric and representation? (2019, p.13).

Animals communicate not only with signs but also with those that have been already embedded within their capacity to use gestures. In doing so, animals take parts in the process "*bodily poiesis*." (Moe, 2013) At this point, zoopoetics treats texts which explore the dwelling of animals on the earth by disclosing their imaginative capacity and those texts reveal the nonhuman social network which is sustained through signs and gestures. Using signs and developing gestures points out the agentic capacity of nonhuman animals. This can be best understood through the representation of nonhuman animals in literary texts.

It is generally accepted that the term “zoopoetics” was used for the first time by Derrida when he said “Kafka’s vast zoopoetics” in order to refer his innovative and pervasive use of animals in his writings. Kafka identifies animals as “*repositories of the forgotten*” (Benjamin, 1999, p. 810) and the integral part of his writing is the revelation of that which has been forgotten and this operation is inseparably connected with the notion of animal. Returning to Derrida, zoopoetics involves attentive listening in order to reveal what has been forgotten or repressed. The listening of the forgotten results in the disembodiment of language and transcending the animal, physical part of the human. Therefore, as Benjamin writes, “*Kafka called the cough erupted from within him ‘animal.’ It was the vanguard of the great herd*” (ibid.). Kafka’s “vast zoopoetics” is, then, a poetics of the body and also refers to one’s own corporeality namely one’s own animality. This is the origin of the term. In other words, zoopoetics texts cannot be simply categorized as texts related to animals. Instead, they are texts reflecting the engagement with animals and animality namely human and nonhuman. Reconsidering the position of animals in literary texts engenders a paradigm shift from the way where animals are simply seen as metaphors, symbols or allegories embodied by literary animals to more complicated animal entanglement with human world. For example, Buck in Jack London’s *The Call of the Wild* is not just a symbol of servitude and he is also not just a dog. He is, contrarily, an “*animot*” (Derrida, 2008, p. 47-48), in Donna Haraway’s sense, namely a “*material-semiotic knot*” (Haraway, 2008, p. 4). On the same point, Driscoll and Hoffmann state “*The task of a zoopoetic reading is precisely to explore what lies between these two extremes, the mutual imbrication and entanglement of the material and the semiotic, the body and the text, the animal and the word*” (2018, p. 4).

It is crucially important and meaningful to speak of zoopoetics as it occludes the traditional reading of literary animals as metaphors, symbols or allegories which blocks the complexity and material-semiotic aspect of the nonhuman animals and also tends to ignore the diversity of literary animals instead identify them under a single category, “the animal.” Such reductionist reading practice only feeds a one-sided way of thinking which usually gives the priority to a male, white, heterosexual, rational human being. However, zoopoetics engages with other disciplines and accordingly produces an intersectional analysis. It looks into how humans and animals intersect with constructions like gender, race, sexuality. In this sense, zoopoetic reading of a literary text can affect other discourses and be affected by them. The engagement of zoopoetics with disciplines like critical race studies, gender studies, disability studies or queer studies paves the way for exploring the function of animality in a way on which we construct our perception of identity and differences.

As a novelist coming from Yozgat, a city in Central Anatolia, Abbas Sayar (1923-1999) mostly tended to focus on the social and economic problems of peasants, which made him to be regarded as one of the “village writers” whose works could be categorized under the name of “Village Literature” specifically referring the realistic works of Village Institute authors¹. Based on his origin, the language of his writings are rich in idioms, proverbs and local accent. Village Institute authors are frequently criticised owing partly to their excessive reflection of political-ideological discourses of that time and also their infertility in creating new characters. However, Sayar excels in representing socio-economic issues in his themes through his peculiar characterization methods. One of them is personification which Sayar

¹ Village Institutes are a project that started in 1940 across Anatolia to train teachers and educate the rural population.

effectively adopted in his famous novel, *Yılkı Atı* (1970). It tells the story of a horse, “Doru” also referred to “Doruk” or “Dorukısrak” in the narrative and the interwoven relation between Doru and her owner, Ibrahim, an Anatolian peasant. Set in a typical Central Anatolian village, the novel impels the reader to reconsider the interlacing relation between human and nonhuman animals and also reveals nonhuman agentive forms of which functions conduct other characters’ lives and the very substance of narrative. Simultaneously, Sayar tries to unfold social, ethical, economic issues of that time through this relation. When the relations among the characters are explored through zoopoetic stance, two thematic criteria become distinctive; parent-child relation and individualism.

1. Parent-child Relation

The eponymous word, “yılki atı” which means an old or worn-out horse defines Doru, who was temporarily left to the wild by her owner to avoid the food share in winter. This is a long-lasting local tradition that necessarily comes out due to poverty. Ibrahim makes a hard decision when he says “*The winter is outside; the straw is limited and so the cowpat is. I can't give the oxen's and the colt's share to this old horse*” (YA, p. 17). Bearing in his mind that Doru has won races many times and also given him colts, Ibrahim is in limbo between his conscience and conscious. However, he cannot resist the enforcements of tradition and the constraints of poverty and accordingly Doru is compelled to live and survive into the wild. The events which have occurred in the course of making Doru a wild horse and later trying to make her a farm horse again shed light on the tense relation between Ibrahim and his son, Mustafa. Their relationship is dominated by the deep-rooted tradition, patriarchy of which effects can be seen in various stages of life from family relations to individual behaviours. Generally defined as a form of male domination based on the powerful role of the father as head of the household, patriarchy has a direct effect on upbringing of children in such a way that fathers usually play a minor role as many tend to avoid a close relationship with their children believing that such an intimacy can detract from his dignity and authority. On this point, Freeman states that “*Although fatherhood has traditionally formed the bastion of patriarchal privilege, this ideological system has rested upon the tacit negation and devaluation of the potential depth and complexity of men's parental relationships*” (2008, p. 114). Mustafa's inability to speak out his opposing ideas about Doru is the outcome of the suppressing power of patriarchy. On the contrary to the expectation, Ibrahim's domination of family members makes him alone especially in the course of making decisions and practicing them rather than providing him with more strength.

At the beginning of the story, Mustafa is strongly opposed to the idea of leaving Doru into the wild and implicitly detests his father's attitude as seen in this excerpt; “*He is hiding the range towards his father behind his fearful eyes*” (YA, p. 21). Despite thinking exactly the opposite, he hardly resists his father's enforcements to take Doru to the wild and leave her there. He reluctantly completes the mission suppressing his feeling of mercy that he has developed for Doru related to her lifelong service. This opposing attitude deepens the gap between a father and his child, which is explicitly reflected through the relation of Ibrahim and Mustafa.

As the plot unfolds, Ibrahim compels his son to bring the horse back to the farm. They trick the horse by using her colt as bait. However, it is not easy as they have thought. After a huge struggle, Doru and her colt manage to run away from them and head for the hills. Mustafa is sent to follow them but he comes up with nothing but with a fear of his father's

reaction. *"He was running approximately for an hour. He got desperate. He was terrified by his father. When he opened his mouth as Mustafa has returned empty-handed, he could curse to his whole family and then Mustafa stated to shout at the abyss: They are absent as if they have gone to earth... Let him shout and curse"* (YA, p. 105). All these things that have happened to Mustafa make a difference in his attitude towards the horses. The horses for which Mustafa initially is full of affection transform into the embodiment of his rage towards his father. *"Mustafa has walked away bearing a grudge against the horses in his hateful heart"* (YA, p. 106).

Another parent-child relation is represented through Doru and her colt. On the contrary to Ibrahim and Mustafa, Doru and her colt have such an affectionate and sincere bond that Doru is able to manage every challenge that she has faced in the wild but cannot ignore her desperate longing for her colt. *"It is as if there is a bulk of ice on her back. The wind is licking up her stomach... She is getting deeply emotional. "It is better a hundred or thousand times [to live in the wild]. Ah, I wish my colt were with me" She heaves a sigh into the abyss of the valley"* (YA, p. 48). Bearing this strong instinctive bond in the mind, Ibrahim plots against Doru by using her colt as a bait because he wants Doru back in his farm. Doru and her colt's first encounter in the wild is remarkable in a way that it assures Ibrahim's assumption claiming Doru would be in her most vulnerable position when she meets her colt. Their affectionate relation is revealed: *"After a couple of hesitating steps the colt snickered and galloped. Approaching to other horses he saw his mother, got excited and halted. [...] The mare firstly smelled his nostrils and bit his neck softly. The colt did the same. They were loving each other"* (YA, p. 104). On seeing their love, Ibrahim considers it is the right time to catch Doru. Therefore, he urges his son to catch the horse with a lead rope. The struggle among two humans and two horses illustrates a vivid juxtaposition of human and nonhuman relations and also makes the reader ponder about this confrontation.

The horse suddenly turned to one side. He had got rid of the lead rope. The horse and Ibrahim gazed at each other. She walked over to Ibrahim emitting nervous, angry sounds. Ibrahim turned to one side. The horse, with the speed she had gained, stated to run in the valley, towards the hills. Her little one is following, crying and neighing. When she sensed that her colt was following her, new energy came over her. She remembered her racing days (YA, 133).

It is clearly understood that Doru and her colt have developed a language to communicate as well as their own perspective and attitude. This makes them agentic beings creating their own plan leading them to their survival. The making of these two horses not only conducts the whole narrative but also functions to reveal patriarchy as a social issue. How distant and artificial Ibrahim and Mustafa's relation is Doru and her colt's bond is contrarily sincere and real. This dualistic representation sheds light on one of the issues of that time, patriarchy. Therefore, the nonhuman representation of a social issue has *"always served as both a mirror and a screen for the human, a site of negativity against which "the human" has been defined"* (Driscoll & Hoffmann, 2018, p. 5). As zoopoetics well states, nonhuman animals are not only objects but also agents of representations. This is also assured by Aaron M. Moe who elaborates on the concept as *"nonhuman animals [...] are makers and "they have agency in that making"* (2014, p. 2). This making creates a juxtaposition which provides the reader with a better understanding of human nature. As the greater importance is given to nonhuman's agentic capacity the closer we get to know the nature of human. With this in the mind, Doru and her colt function as foil characters to highlight the

relationship between Ibrahim and his son. This revelation can be obtained through literature as Moe indicates nonhuman's agentic capacity "is best understood as a poetry that revisits, examines, perplexes, provokes, and explores the agency of the nonhuman animal" (2012, p. 30).

2. Individualism

Individualism is another theme which becomes more complicated and comprehensive when the zoopoetic reading is applied to the text. The dilemma between the individual stance and the social or environmental enforcements is skilfully represented in *Yilki Atı*. Ibrahim, an Anatolian peasant has been experiencing such a dilemma since he chose to chase Doru away though he could not deny what Doru had contributed to his life. The decision is hard to make for him. However, in the village, chasing old horses away into the wild is a long tradition which definitely emerges out of poverty. Peasants have developed this tradition in order to spare food for much younger horses since it is hard to find and store straw in the winter time. What is worse, they clearly demonstrate their selfishness, greed and meanness when they bring those horses back once the winter is over and those horses manage to survive in harsh weather conditions regaining their strength. This is thoroughly an anthropocentric attitude ignoring the intrinsic value of nonhuman animals. When considered from this point of view, Ibrahim's anthropocentric attitude in the disguise of tradition outweighs his individual stance. His wife and his two sons are quite reactive against him because of the fact that he has behaved mercilessly towards the horse that has served them for many years. Sayar puts his wife's thoughts into the words as follows; "Father of tirans, she said. He is of no good to my Doru, is he of any good to us" (YA, p. 22).

In Ibrahim's case, the individual stance is overwhelmed by the social enforcement stemming from economic difficulties. Ironically enough, Ibrahim who does everything on the excuse of economic reasons, feels a great frustration as he has lost both horses at the end of the story. However, in Doru's case, individual choices provide her with freedom and a chance to live with her own colt. It is clearly understood that Doru merits more respect than her owner as she can skilfully conduct the fight for survival in the wild where she has not been used to living before. She was born and has serviced in Ibrahim's farm so far without knowing any other form of life except from hers. When being chased away, Doru desperately seeks ways to survive in the wild. It is a big challenge for her as she has been completely depended on her owner to survive. This dependency is illustrated by Sayar as follows; "Doru was shattered by everlasting dog sounds. She hardly hit the barn door and waited for the door to open but in vain... She was stranger to all the ways and directed to the place where some light is filtering. The feet hardly bore her weight. The floor was partly icy and snowy. There was no a bit of sound from her hooves without horseshoe" (YA, p. 70). Symbolically speaking, when the horseshoes are removed after deciding that Doru should be chased away into the wild, she becomes speechless. Considering from anthropocentric point of view, Doru becomes invisible after the manmade horseshoes are taken away. This is such a utilitarian attitude which disrespects the intrinsic value of nonhuman animals and also reveals that nonhuman animals can be easily forgotten when they stop being useful for human beings.

Ibrahim finds himself into a complete frustration on seeing that he has been beaten by a poor horse who could survive in the harsh condition of the winter and moreover who could manage to escape from Ibrahim's vicious plot. She is illustrated relatively more independent and more capable of handling the challenges no matter how hard they are. More importantly, Doru reveals that humans are not the only makers in this planet to have

agentive capacity and the gestural and oral energy manifested in human speech cannot be defined as a mere human creation. As Moe states “*And it is not just human gestures that shaped the origin of speech. Zoopoetics gravitates toward pantomimes that emerged from an attentiveness to animals. [...] A speaker attuned to the gestures of his or her mouth realizes how, with little effort, the lips, jaw and teeth, cheeks and perhaps even the eyes enact a snarling pantomime of another species’ bodily poiesis each time the words are performed*” (2013, p. 16). Speech, then cannot be only defined as the vocalization of words through human mouth. It is a combination of oral and gestural energy emerging from the interspecific bodily poiesis. It also comes to mean that nonhuman animals have also their own gestural and oral energy that work with inter and intraspecies dynamics. This engenders a big communicative zone for Doru to show her affection and consideration towards her coat, other horses and characters in the story.

Doru, in this sense, represents many qualifications which are usually attributed to humans. She becomes “*material-semiotic knot,*” the entanglement of the material and the metaphorical. Through zoopoetic reading, though, she is more than that. Her communication skill not only creates a big change in her life but also a remarkable effect on other characters and the very substance of the text. Therefore, the function of Doru as a literary character transcends the metaphorical or allegorical meaning as she appears as a truly agentive form in the text. The zoopoetic approach denies the traditional tendency to label the animals in literary texts as symbols, metaphors or allegories, instead attempts to find ways in which animals operate in literary texts as “*functions of their literariness*” (McHugh, 2009a, p. 490). As the writer of *Beast of the Modern Imagination*, which is considered as essential work in animal studies, Margot Norris states “*It seem[s] that nowhere in literature [are] animals to be allowed to be themselves, to refer to Nature and to their own animality without being pressed into symbolic service as metaphors, or as figures in fable or allegory (invariably of some aspect of the human)*” (1985, p. 17). Also, this traditional approach gives the impression that animals are essential in literary text only in relation to human subjectivity. From this standpoint, such reading seems to be working at odds with zoopoetic approaches in which animals function as social and textual agents. In other words, representation of animals in literary texts through human subjectivity is another form of forgetting and disappearance (McHugh, 2009b, p. 24). In *Yılıkı Atı*, the sound of Doru’s hooves which is heard by nobody reifies the idea that “*animals are disappearing*” (Berger, 1980, p. 14). This implies that Doru has completed her service so far and from now on she is considered as a burden because of her age and poor physical conditions. Accordingly, it is the correct time to discard and forget her. Therefore, to leave Doru into the wild is a way of forgetting. Surprisingly, Doru is determined not to be forgotten and will be probably remembered with her potential to make her own way and the feeling of frustration she evokes in Ibrahim as she skilfully gets over him and head for her freedom.

Doru’s individual attitude has also functioned in developing a strong emotional bond among other horses. The solidarity among other wild horses is quite impressive and plays a very important role in Doru’s survival. “*There were six of them left, together with Doru and Çılkır. All enemies of hay, grass and barley, all disgraced now. The six horses who have to take care of themselves. They looked at each other in amazement. They snuggled up [...] and kept on marching. It is as if the front ones are pulling the ones behind with an invisible rope*” (YA, p. 52). The winter is really heavy but what makes it harder for Doru is her unfamiliarity with such conditions. “*Doru is unable to understand what is happening around, totally stranger to such winter and storm. She used to be kept in the warm barn when winter comes and get drowsy there with a full bag of hay*

and barley. [...] But now, it is the opposite. How could Doru overcome this cruelty? She kept going round in circles in order to beat the biting cold" (YA, p. 52). Doru and other horses in the wild develop a peculiar way of communication through their gestural energy. This communication causes strong esprit de corps which encourages them to overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles and endure extreme hardships. Not only solidarity but also their innate adaptability skill contributes to their survival adventure. "Their only chance was the skill of adaptation that is embedded in their substance by nature" (YA, p. 66).

When emotions are considered, there is an anthropocentric fallacy that feeling is accessible only to humans. However, Steven Shaviro has refuted this idea by referring Thomas Nagel paper "What is it like to be a bat?" (1974). He argues that since "the bat's thinking is inaccessible to us, we should not anthropomorphize the bat's experience by modelling it on our own. But we also should not claim that, just because it is nonhuman, or not like us, the bat cannot have experiences at all" (2015, p. 25-26). Returning to the story, Doru has experienced different feelings like sadness, fear, disappointment when she is not allowed to come back the barn and see her colt. "The sun has penetrated into her heart through her back. She has filled with unidentified feelings. She has returned and looked at the animals approaching; looked for her little one but could discern nothing in the dust. She has bowed her head and mused..." (YA, p. 23)

When the contradiction between the human beings who are marked with such feelings like greediness, egoism, their inability to make their own decisions and the nonhuman animals' skill of adaptation as well as solidarity among them are considered, it can be concluded that humans should seriously consider to engage with nonhuman lives to reevaluate themselves. Through zoopoetic reading, this engagement refers to the idea that humans and nonhuman animals are interrelated in a process of "co-making." Barry Commoner uses net as a metaphor to illustrate this connection. "Most ecosystems are so complex that the cycles are not simple circular paths, but are crisscrossed with branches to form a network or a fabric of interconnections. Like a net, in which each knot is connected to others by several strands, such a fabric can resist collapse better than a simple, unbranched circle of threads-which if cut anywhere breaks down as a whole" (1971, p.38). This necessarily means that both human and nonhuman animals are heterogeneous entities without any qualitative hierarchy. Instead, all beings are equally situated in a continuous interaction through which some human values can be redefined.

Zoopoetics proposes that human creativity is not an individual action attributed only to human beings, but rather "a transformation in one's own being in the prospect of reflecting the other" (Marchesini, 2016, p. 178). Marchesini points out that what we usually think of as purely "human" aesthetic forms are in fact produced within a zone of interpretation that "envisage[s] a merging between entities" (ibid.). In other words, seeing the creation of artworks as a separate action excluded from nonhuman forces can be misleading. In *Yılık Atı*, therefore, the interaction between human and nonhuman animals contributes to the process of poetic creation by making humans recognize themselves in the animal.

This is an idea which completely contradicts with anthropocentric perception. In the age of the Anthropocene, one might say that there is nowhere in this planet that does not in some way bear the imprint of human activity. This anthropocentric fallacy is strikingly illustrated in *Yılık Atı* in which the priority is given to Doru in terms of her capacity to make individual decisions, to adapt the unfamiliar environment and to foster solidarity. To stop this fallacy, there must be a paradigm shift from the idea that human being is the sole user of

language to the belief which arguing for nonhuman animals are potentially agents to develop their own language. On this context, Kari Weil restates that “[t]he idea of ‘the animal’-the instinctive being with presumably no access to language, texts, or abstract thinking-has functioned as an unexamined foundation on which the idea of the human and hence the humanities have been built” (Weil, 2012, p. 23). The idea that animals have the potential to develop their own language is reified through the sound of horseshoe which is earlier silenced as the outcome of anthropocentric perspective. However, as the plot unfolds, Doru denies the human captivity and reveals her real capacity. When she and her colt head for freedom, their sound cannot be silenced anymore. “On the outskirts of the hill, they heard the harmonious sounds of their hooves without horseshoe” (YA, p. 105).

CONCLUSION

In *Yılıkı Atı*, Sayar skilfully illustrates the life of Central Anatolian peasants with the specific focus on their long-held tradition about old horses. By doing this, he has created two different but entangled worlds for the human and the nonhuman animals. When these worlds are juxtaposed, two themes become distinctive throughout the story; parent-child relation and individualism. The relation between Ibrahim and his son, Mustafa is elaborated through Doru’s story. Doru who has served Ibrahim for fifteen years is chased away to the wild claiming that she is too old and not worth feeding with the already limited food share. In this process, she has undergone many traumatic experiences like having to depart from her own colt, being banished from the place where she used to live and accordingly compelled to live in a thoroughly new environment in which survival is quite challenging for her. She has tried to come back several times in each of which she was repulsed with scorn and indignation by Ibrahim. Mustafa implicitly criticises his father’s attitude towards Doru and finds him ungrateful and merciless. However, it is impossible for him to express his feelings boldly and frankly since he has been restrained by the patriarchal society he was born into. As a father, Ibrahim is a distant figure whom Mustafa has to respect with the feelings of fear, anger and admiration. On the one hand, Mustafa criticises his father for his attitude towards Doru, on the other hand, feels a kind of hidden admiration because of the possibility of getting the same power one day in the future. In Ibrahim’s case, patriarchy which is disguised as the appeal to have a full domination over the family stands alongside a deep-seated negligence for parenting to be perceived as a crucial dimension of male experience. As far as parenting is concerned, Doru and her colt have instinctively developed a strong and sincere bond which leads them to their own survival at the end of the story. The relation between Doru and her colt transforms into a kind of mirror through which Ibrahim and Mustafa’s relation has been defined.

At the same time, Doru and her colt’s successful escape plan causes a change in Mustafa’s stance towards animals. Knowing that his father would be extremely furious with him since he could not manage to catch the horses, Mustafa curses Doru and her colt, which is an unexpected attitude from him as he has initially criticised his father for his cruelty towards Doru. In this sense, the nonhuman animals in the story bear an agentive role in creating and changing the perceptions related to social and personal issues.

Individualism is the other central theme in the story. Far from celebrating human being’s capacity to develop a strong individual stance, Sayar distinctively illustrates how nonhuman animals excel in developing an individual attitude despite of the fact that they have been considered as inferior to human beings in almost all cases. Ibrahim cannot resist

the local tradition on the ground of having to consider the limited food share though it is also hard for him to discard his favourite mare who actually merits gratitude and affection. This anthropocentric attitude also shows itself when Ibrahim wants to have Doru back once the winter is over. He is reflected as a weak, helpless and self-centric character who is not able to cope with the situation. These attributes definitely do not imply a strong individual stance but rather reflects an attitude manipulated by materialistic or social motives. Unlike Ibrahim, Sayar portrays Doru as a strong, persistent, resilient and sensitive character and accordingly she is able to survive with her innate harmony with nature.

Her survival also depends on the fact that she is relatively successful at communicating with other characters in the story. This overlaps with the idea that communication is not only sustained by human speech, yet it is the production of oral and gestural energy between species. Ibrahim, who lacks such an understanding, fails in feeling empathy with Doru and also anticipating her plan to escape, therefore finds himself in frustration at the end of the story. Moreover, in the intraspecies relations, Ibrahim is again illustrated as an unsuccessful communicator particularly in his relation with his children and wife. To reveal this, Doru functions as mirror image which has already transcended the metaphorical and symbolic representation of nonhuman animals. As zoopoetics argues, to illustrate nonhuman animals in metaphorical paradigm is the outcome of human subjectivity, which disregards the fact that nonhuman animals have their own perspective on the world and this perspective may not coincide with ours. That is to say, the anthropocentric way of thinking is not the only one that matters.

The story offers a commentary on the condition of the horses and the peasants in a Central Anatolian village. As a realistic Village Institute author, Sayar mostly focuses on demonstrating economic and social issues of the village by juxtaposing two profiles from human and nonhuman worlds. In addition to the author's intention, this juxtaposition causes to re-evaluate the proximity between human and nonhuman worlds. Zoopoetics does not insist upon erasing the line between humans and nonhuman animals but rather complicating, thickening, dividing and multiplying that line till it creates its own abyss. In this newly created platform, zoopoetics argues for the fact that nonhuman animals are also makers and they have agentive role in that making as such in creating the harmonious sounds of their hooves without horseshoe in Doru's case. Therefore, Sayar's project of paying attention to other modes of being points out the fact that the overlapping of animal and human lives favours the creation of a sense of community and the necessity of coexistence. The zoopoetic reading of *Yılık Atı*, then, acknowledges that each textual animal presence enables an insight that moves beyond the human and toward a less anthropocentric perception of the world. Such understanding can help enrich the empathetic imagination as we all try to find better ways of coexisting with other species on this shared planet.

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